

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

In excavating a new sewer in Winkle-street, Southampton, a few days since, a lofty and extensive subterranean passage was accidentally opened by the workmen. It appears to have been cut in the old wall of the town for defensive purposes, or means of escape if the enemy should scale the walls.—The plan for the Portland breakwater, as sanctioned by the Woods and Forests, is deposited with Mr. C. Hinde, Referee, Portland, where it may be inspected by any one interested in the formation of this national work.—By the way a breakwater for the protection of war-vessels is to be constructed at the Isle of Alderney.—The demand for cement stone at Harwich is now so very extensive, chiefly from the large quantities of the prepared article used in railway works, that the stock, usually consisting of several thousand tons at this season, is now quite exhausted. Prices here, in consequence, risen 30 per cent., while the dredgers are reaping a proportionate benefit. It is calculated that 25,000*l.* per annum are paid away in wages alone to the workmen employed in this trade.—A district national school for 200 boys and 200 girls is to be erected at Ipswich, in place of the St. Nicholas school-room, required for railway approaches.—Old Weston church, Huntingdonshire, has been lately undergoing considerable repair. The whole has been repewed, with new reading desk, pulpit, font, and screens to chancel and belfry tower, under the direction of Mr. George Allen, architect, Saint Ives.—The Lord Bishop of Lichfield has given 1,000*l.* to the Lichfield Diocesan Church Building Society.—12,023*l.* have now been subscribed for the Liverpool Church Building Society. Among the last subscribers are the Earl of Derby, 300*l.*; Mr. R. B. B. Blundell, 200*l.*; Mr. C. Leyland, 200*l.*; and Mr. James Lawrence, 100*l.*—A portion of the extensive dock-buildings at Birkenhead, are so far advanced towards completion, that the contractors, Messrs. Milton and Morris, have commenced putting on the roofs. Mr. Brassey, we understand, has undertaken the completion of the docks, at a sum exceeding a quarter of a million sterling, as soon as the large backwater tunnel from the upper part of Wallasey Foot to the Woodside slip is completed.—A new borough gaol is to be built at Leeds at a cost of 40,000*l.*—As the enlargement and restoration of Pittington church, Durham, has progressed, says the *Durham Advertiser*, "discoveries have been made which will furnish matter of curious study to antiquaries, and somewhat puzzle the confident race of modern architects." We cannot, however, learn what these are from the account.—Three of the Eglington iron furnaces, according to the *Kilmarnock Journal*, will be in blast before the year expires, and a fourth is being built. They are said to be higher and of wider diameter than any hitherto erected, and to be designed on the most approved models for efficient working.

LITERARY RE-UNION.—In connection with the Britton testimonial, a number of dinners were given last season by the friends of that gentleman. On Saturday last, Mr. W. Tooke, *p.r.s.*, recommended them, by entertaining at a round table, in the Freemason's Tavern, Messrs. Bernard, Peter Cunningham, N. Gould, T. Grissell, W. Herbert, Humphreys, &c., (Godwin, W. Jerdan, J. Bowyer, Nichols, A. W. Tooke, and S. Warren, the author of "Ten Thousand a Year." The Rev. Mr. Mitford, Messrs. Thomas Cubitt, W. Tite, and Charles Knight, were also to have been there, but were prevented. Mr. Britton was unluckily kept away himself by illness. At the last preceding meeting artists preponderated, including Mr. Utting, Mr. Roberts, and Sir W. Ross, of the Academy, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Wagstaffe, &c.

ANTIQUITIES NEAR MELBOURNE.—Several discoveries have recently been made in and about Newstead, including a subterranean chamber or recess, which was come upon by a labouring man while draining in the fields. The place was of a vaulted shape, and extended inwards about sixty feet, its breadth varying from four to seven feet. It was built of freestone, and two of the stones which were taken out of it were ornamented with a kind of rope-carving of beautiful workmanship.

RAILWAY CARRIAGES.

We recommend the following remarks on this subject, from Mr. Ritchie's late interesting work,* to the consideration of all railway directors.

"There can be no doubt that when Government had to introduce a bill into Parliament to protect the rights of the working classes in railway transit, by restricting the rate of charge for third class passengers to a penny per mile, and requiring railway companies to run at least one train having covered third class carriages daily, that much indifference, to say the least of it, must have been shown before any interference took place. But why restrict the penny a mile trains to once a day? why should not carriages of this kind go with every train? Little doubt, however, can be entertained that the construction of railway carriages in this country must be soon entirely remodelled, or at least material changes made on those now in use, before either much comfort or safety will be attained in the cheaper class carriages. It is bad enough to be exposed to the annoyance of dust and risk of losing one's eyes in open carriages, without showers of red-hot cinders, which could be greatly mitigated or entirely prevented by proper mechanical contrivances. Many persons would prefer the open carriages in fine weather, irrespective of the charge, were it not for these annoyances; and in Belgium the waggons or open cars are filled with respectable people, who amuse away at their ease.

In this country the government third class carriages are so hideous and dismal, air and light being nearly both excluded, that they are more adapted for carriage of prisoners than passengers. In some of the third class government carriages there is a wax cloth curtain to draw over the opening, in others a small open window, or rather hole, is left on both sides of the carriage, excluding all view of the country. Till the government regulation the third class were open stalls. The standing carriages are now on some lines called fourth class carriages, and open carriages with seats are called third class carriages. One cannot wonder a third class passenger will rather prefer the external atmosphere to the internal of the close penny a mile carriages. For example, in the third class government carriages on some railways, when all the blinds are drawn up, which often happens in cold weather, the carriage, in daylight, is involved in total darkness. Well may it be asked, is such a carriage a proper conveyance for any one, far less females. Why should not glazed windows be in every carriage? It cannot be the expense of glass; and a penny per mile is surely sufficient to cover such expenses and pay the railway company properly; and when night trains are used they should be properly lighted. Indeed, it may be questioned if the second and third class passengers are not the most paying, as they are the most numerous class on every railway, and low fares tend clearly to increase numbers, and why should their comfort not be more attended to? In the Belgium railways, which are placed under the management of a government director, who acts under the control of the Minister of Public Works and other functionaries, the rate of charge was formerly higher. When lowered an increase in the number of passengers took place. The charge, I believe, now is:—

1-14 pence per mile first-class carriage,
93 " ditto second-class ditto,
56 " ditto third-class ditto,

or about sixpence for ten miles for the third class; while in this country the lowest rate fixed by Act of Parliament is a penny per mile, being nearly one-half more. The first class is nearly 1*l.*, and second class 10*l.*, for the same distance. This, for forty-six miles, would respectively be, about 4*l.* 8*l.*, 4*l.*, and 2*l.* 4*l.*; while the prices in this country are, 8*l.*, 6*l.*, and 4*l.* for the same distance.

The railway companies in this country might do well to take a lesson from their continental neighbours. The carriages in Belgium consist of three classes, as here; but they possess more comfort and convenience, besides being cheaper. The diligences, or first class, have a sort of vestibule, from which there is ingress to a separate spacious apartment,

handsomely fitted up, or the carriage is divided by a narrow passage into two compartments; they are stuffed throughout, and exceedingly comfortable conveyances. The second class, *chairs-à-banc à glaces*, consist principally of one large apartment, entirely closed in at the sides, as the name implies, with glazed windows and well-arranged cushioned seats. The third class, opened and covered waggons, do not differ much from the second, having covered seats; but the roofs are sometimes supported at the angles of the carriages by iron rods. The carriages are generally seated to hold thirty-two passengers, and the doors are usually placed at the ends. Carriages made entirely of iron have recently been introduced on the Belgian railways. Nor need we look to Belgium alone: in France the carriages generally approach to the style of the first class in this country. The second and third class, or *waggon*, far surpass the corresponding classes on our lines. The second, and commonly the third classes in France are perfectly closed carriages, stuffed, cushioned, and glazed, each class being only a little inferior to the other in decoration. The fares, too, are generally low.

The adoption of such a plan of carriages as those on the Belgian railways, would prevent the risk from the numerous doors in all classes of carriages used in this country. These doors are generally fastened by a common spring latch, which a sudden jerk may break or derange. Few can travel in any of the present carriages without the apprehension of serious accidents even from the people falling out. We are always hearing of hair-breadth escapes; and in a late newspaper the case is mentioned of a child falling out of a carriage unperceived, and how can it be otherwise when there is hardly room to move without coming in contact with a door? I have seen several instances of persons nearly losing their lives from the door on which they leaned suddenly bursting open. Very little ingenuity could remedy this defect; a simple drop bolt inside the carriage in enambination with the latch might suffice.

Another very dangerous and improper practice which exists on several lines, and which creates well-grounded alarm to passengers, is, making the guard step from carriage to carriage by the side steps, holding on by the door handles, in order to collect tickets, and often when the train is going at great speed. The least sudden jerk, or his slipping his hold, would occasion loss of life. Surely such a practice ought to be condemned, for it is as repugnant to common sense as to humanity."

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

THE report of the committee on the condition of the railway labourers, lately published, contains a sad account of the condition of these poor men, and of the oppression and injustice to which, we are sorry to say, they are too often subject, in recovering the full amount of their hard-earned wages.—The creditors of the bankrupt railway company (the Tring, Reading, and Basingstoke) have been promised a dividend of 20*l.* in the pound on their respective claims. The shareholders too in most cases are said to have agreed to the return of 3*l.* 3*s.* per share offered by the directors.—It is said that although the South-Western line will ultimately extend to London-bridge, the principal terminus, which is to surpass in magnificence every thing of the sort hitherto exhibited; will be at Hungerford-bridge; on the site of which the company are to build another bridge, whereby passengers will be conveyed at once into the heart of the metropolis.—At Windsor, on Monday week, a very stormy assemblage met to consider a proposition from the Great Western Company to carry a branch through Eton, where, as articulated, in the midst of the storm, by one "loud Boreas," youths run about at large, "as wildly as wild blood-horses,"—ripe for every mischief, we suppose he meant, and ready, as exemplary sprigs of nobility, to run any given "branch," with the sprigs themselves to boot, into one eternal pickle. In short, the Eton College authorities denounced the risk of opening a railway line through the dangerous wilds and fastnesses of Eton; and a miscellaneous assemblage, full of division and of resolution, could arrive at neither resolution nor division on a subject wherein it appeared they could agree to nothing but to differ.—

* "Railways, their Rise, Progress, and Construction," by R. Ritchie, Civil Engineer. Longman and Co., 1846.